K. Gt. Britain & Ireland. Commissioners of Longitude

MINUTES

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS of the COMMISSIONERS

Appointed by Act of Parliament

FOR THE

Discovery of the LONGITUDE at Sea,

MUSEUM BRITAN NIUM

Their Meetings on the 25th, 28th, and 30th of *May*, and 17th of *June*, 1765.

WITH

Respect to carrying into Execution so much of an Act passed in the last Sessions of Parliament, as relates to the giving Mr. *John Harrison* a Reward, upon his making a Discovery of the Principles of his *Watch* or *Timekeeper*.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

MINUTES, &c.

AT a meeting at the Admiralty on Saturday the 25th of May, 1765,

PRESENT,

Right Honourable Earl of Egmont, *First Lord Commiſſioner of the Admiralty.*

Henry Oſborn, Eſq; } *Admirals of the White.*
Sir Edward Hawke, }

Sir George Pocock, *Admiral of the Blue.*

Right Honourable Earl of Morton, *Preſident of the Royal Society.*

Reverend Mr. Maſkelyne, *Aſtronomer Royal.*

Reverend Mr. Hornſby, *Savilian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Betts, *Savilian Profeſſor of Geometry at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Shepherd, *Plumian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy and Experimental Philoſophy at Cambridge.*

Mr. Waring, *Lucaſian Profeſſor of Mathematicks at Cambridge.*

Philip Stephens, Eſq; *Secretary of the Admiralty.*

George Cokburne, Eſq; *Comptroller of the Navy.*

Reverend Dr. Long, *Lowndes's Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Cambridge.*

The Minutes of the laſt meeting on the 23d of January laſt were read.

An act, lately paſſed, for explaining and amending thoſe of the 12th of Queen Anne, and 26th of George II. relating to Longitude, was, in part, read.

Reſolved,

To adjourn to Tueſday morning next, at nine o'clock, at which time the abſent Commiſſioners are to be deſired to attend.

Adjourned.

AT a meeting at the Admiralty on Tueſday the 28th of May, 1765,

P R E S E N T,

Right Honourable Earl of Egmont, *Firſt Lord Commiſſioner of the Admiralty.*

Right Honourable Sir John Cuſt, *Speaker of the Houſe of Commons.*

Right Honourable Lord Viſcount Barrington, *Treaſurer of the Navy.*

Sir William Rowley, *Admiral of the Fleet.*

Henry Oſborn, Eſq;
Sir Edward Hawke, } *Admirals of the White.*

Honourable John Forbes,
Sir George Pocock, } *Admirals of the Blue.*

Right Honourable Earl of Morton, *Preſident of the Royal Society.*

Reverend Mr. Maſkelyne, *Aſtronomer Royal.*

Reverend Mr. Hornſby, *Savilian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Betts, *Savilian Profeſſor of Geometry at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Shepherd, *Plumian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy and Experimental Philoſophy at Cambridge.*

Mr. Waring, *Lucaſian Profeſſor of Mathematicks at Cambridge.*

Charles Jenkinſon, Eſq;
Thomas Whately, Eſq; } *Secretaries of the Treaſury.*

Philip Stephens, Eſq; *Secretary of the Admiralty.*

George Cokburne, Eſq; *Comptroller of the Navy.*

Reverend Dr. Long, *Lowndes's Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Cambridge.*

The

The minutes of the laſt meeting on the 25th inſtant were read.

The Act paſſed in the laſt Seſſion of Parliament for explaining and amending thoſe of the 12th of Queen Anne, and 26th of George II. was then read: After which the Board went into the conſideration of proper means for carrying the ſaid Act into execution; and having diſcourſed ſome time upon that part of it which relates to giving a reward to Mr. John Harriſon, upon his diſcovering the principles of his Watch or Timekeeper, his Son, who was attending, was called in, and was deſired to inform the Board, in what manner his father propoſes to diſcover the ſaid principles. He anſwered, that he was commiſſioned by him to deliver to the Board the identical drawings from which his ſaid Watch or Timekeeper was made, with explanations thereof in writing; and that his father expects that the Commiſſioners will, upon receipt of the ſaid drawings and explanations, give him a certificate to enable him to receive the firſt reward directed to be paid him by the abovementioned Act; and that he is not authorized by his father to offer any other mode of diſcovery.

He then withdrew.

The Board then took into conſideration the method of diſcovery propoſed by Mr. Harriſon's ſon, on the part of his father, as above-mentioned; and being unanimouſly of opinion, that drawings and written explanations alone, will not be a ſufficient and ſatisfactory diſcovery of the principles of the ſaid Watch or Timekeeper, agreeable to the beforementioned Act;

Reſolved,

Reſolved,

That Mr. Harriſon be acquainted, that the Commiſſioners do expect his compliance with what is under-mentioned, before they can give him the certificate he requires, viz.

1. That he ſhall diſcover fully, by drawings and a written explanation, the principles upon which his ſaid Watch is conſtructed, and deliver the ſame to this Board, upon oath.

2. That he ſhall give a further explanation by word of mouth, and experimental exhibitions where judged neceſſary, of the ſaid principles, and of every thing relative to the conſtruction of the ſaid Watch; producing the ſame; taking it to pieces; and anſwering, upon oath, to every queſtion propoſed by the Board, and ſuch perſons as may be appointed by them for the examination thereof.

3. That he is to make over the property of the three ſeveral Timekeepers, and the Watch, when he ſhall receive his certificate.

Mr. Harriſon's ſon was then called in, and theſe reſolutions having been read to him, and a copy given him to ſhew to his father, he withdrew, having been firſt told, that the Board expected to know his father's determination on Thurſday morning next, when they would meet again for that purpoſe.

Adjourned to Thurſday morning next, at Ten o'Clock.

AT a Meeting at the Admiralty on Thurſday the 30th of May, 1765.

PRESENT,

Right Honourable Earl of Egmont, *Firſt Lord Commiſſioner of the Admiralty.*

Right Honourable Sir John Cuſt, *Speaker of the Houſe of Commons.*

Right Honourable Lord Viſcount Barrington, *Treaſurer of the Navy.*

Sir Edward Hawke, *Admiral of the White.*

Honourable John Forbes, } *Admirals of the Blue.*
Sir George Pocock, }

Right Honourable Earl of Morton, *Preſident of the Royal Society.*

Reverend Mr. Maſkelyne, *Aſtronomer Royal.*

Reverend Mr. Hornſby, *Savilian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Betts, *Savilian Profeſſor of Geometry at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Shepherd, *Plumian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy and Experimental Philoſophy at Cambridge.*

Mr. Waring, *Lucaſian Profeſſor of Mathematicks at Cambridge.*

Philip Stephens, Eſq; *Secretary of the Admiralty.*

George Cokburne, Eſq; *Comptroller of the Navy.*

Reverend Dr. Long, *Lowndes's Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Cambridge.*

The Minutes of the laſt meeting on the 28th inſtant were read.

Mr.

Mr. John Harriſon, who was attending, was called in, (together with his ſon) and diſcourſed with concerning the method propoſed for the diſcovery of the principles of his Watch or Timekeeper; and conſented to do it agreeable to the Reſolutions of the laſt Board.

They then withdrew.

The Board then took into conſideration the nomination of proper perſons to be preſent when the diſcovery ſhall be made: And, after ſome time ſpent therein, Mr. Harriſon and his ſon were again called in; and ſome perſons, who were named by the Commiſſioners, having been objected to by them, the Board came to the following Reſolutions, which were agreed to by Mr. Harriſon, viz.

That, in addition to ſuch of the Commiſſioners who ſhall chuſe to be preſent, three gentlemen ſkilled in mechanicks, and three watchmakers, be appointed to attend when the abovementioned diſcovery ſhall be made.

That the former be Lord Charles Cavendiſh; the Reverend Mr. John Michell, late Woodwardian Profeſſor at Cambridge; and the Reverend Mr. William Ludlam, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge: And that the latter be Mr. Thomas Mudge, and Mr. William Mathews, of Fleet-ſtreet; and Mr. Larcum Kendal, of Furnival's Inn Court.

And, in caſe any of the former ſhould refuſe, that then Mr. John Bird, Mathematical Inſtrument Maker, in the Strand; And, in caſe any of the latter ſhould refuſe, that then Mr. Juſtin Vulliamy, of Pall-Mall, or ſuch other perſons as the Commiſſioners ſhall think fit, be deſired to ſupply their Places.

Reſolved,

Reſolved,

That the Secretary do write to the abovementioned Mr. Michell, and Mr. Ludlam, and alſo to Mr. Mudge, Mr. Mathews, and Mr. Kendal, to know if they will undertake to give their attendance when the diſcovery ſhall be made; and, if they will, to deſire they will meet the Commiſſioners at this place on this day fortnight.

Lord Egmont was pleaſed to undertake to write to the ſame effect to Lord Charles Cavendiſh.

Reſolved,

That it be an inſtruction to ſuch of the abovementioned gentlemen and watchmakers, as may be inclined to attend, to meet Mr. Harriſon as ſoon as poſſible, and to continue their meetings with him without interruption: And that they be enjoined not to make any diſcovery of the principles of the Watch to any but the Board, *without leave of the Commiſſioners.*

Adjourned to this day fortnight at Twelve o'clock.

AT a Meeting at the Admiralty on Thurſday the 13th of June, 1765,

PRESENT,

Right Honourable Earl of Egmont, *Firſt Lord Commiſſioner of the Admiralty.*

Sir John Cuſt, *Speaker of the Houſe of Commons.*

Henry Oſborn, Eſq; *Admiral of the White.*

Honourable John Forbes, Sir George Pocock, } *Admirals of the Blue.*

Right Honourable Earl of Morton, *Preſident of the Royal Society.*

Reverend Mr. Maſkelyne, *Aſtronomer Royal.*

Reverend Mr. Hornſby, *Savilian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Betts, *Savilian Profeſſor of Geometry at Oxford.*

Reverend Mr. Shepherd, *Plumian Profeſſor of Aſtronomy and Experimental Philoſophy at Cambridge.*

Sir Thomas Saluſbury, *Judge of the High Court of Admiralty.*

Philip Stephens, Eſq; *Secretary of the Admiralty.*

George Cokburne, Eſq; *Comptroller of the Navy.*

Reverend Dr. Long, *Lowndes's Profeſſor of Aſtronomy at Cambridge.*

The Reverend Mr. Michell and Mr. Ludlam, together with Mr. Bird, (Lord Charles Cavendiſh having declined to come) and the three Watchmakers named in the Margin, who were attending in conſequence of the Reſolutions of the laſt Board, were introduced.

Mr. Mudge, Mr. Mathews, Mr. Kendal.

The Minutes of the laſt Meeting were then read; as were the Board's Reſolutions of the 28th of laſt month, with regard to the manner in which they expect Mr. Harriſon to make the diſcovery

diſcovery of the principles of his Timekeeper; and, after ſome converſation upon the matter, the perſons abovementioned agreed to attend Mr. Harriſon, to receive the ſaid diſcovery agreeable to the Board's Reſolutions.

Mr. Harriſon, who was attending, was then called in, (together with his Son) and being informed that the Board was now ready to fix upon a time for his making the abovementioned diſcovery, agreeable to the Reſolutions of the two laſt Boards, which had been communicated to him, and to which he had before given his aſſent; he denied ever having given ſuch aſſent, and abſolutely refuſed to do it agreeable to thoſe Reſolutions; and, at the ſame Time, referred the Board to a letter, which he ſaid he had delivered at their laſt meeting, containing his objections thereto. The Board, not recollecting any thing of that letter, were naturally led into an enquiry concerning it; and thereupon found, that ſuch a one had been diſcovered, lying upon the table, by ſome of the Commiſſioners who remained after the laſt Board broke up, and had been given by them to the Secretary; but it did not appear to whom the ſaid letter had been delivered, or how it came upon the table. It was then called for, and read in the words following, viz.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

" ON Tueſday I received, by the hand of my Son, your
" Reſolutions on that day; the firſt of which is what I
" thought you would demand, therefore my Son was com-
" miſſioned to comply with it.

" The

" The firſt part of the ſecond reſolution, viz. " That I " " ſhall give a farther explanation by word of mouth," may " alſo be complied with ; but it muſt be mentioned who I am " to give this farther explanation to, for I will never attempt " to explain it to the ſatisfaction of the Commiſſioners, and " who they may appoint ; nor will I ever come under the " directions of men of theory. As to the other part of this " your ſecond reſolution, viz. " Experimental exhibitions, " " where judged neceſſary, relative to the ſaid Watch, pro- " " ducing the ſame, taking it in pieces, and anſwering upon " " oath to every queſtion propoſed by the Board, and ſuch " " perſons as may be appointed by them for the examination " " thereof;" theſe are terms which I cannot comply with.

" As to your third reſolution, that I certainly will comply " with, when I have got my juſt reward.

" I cannot help thinking but I am extremely ill uſed by " Gentlemen who I might have expected a different treatment " from ; for if the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne be deficient, " why have I ſo long been encouraged under it, in order to " bring my invention to perfection ? and, after the completion, " why was my Son ſent twice to the Weſt Indies ? Had it " been ſaid to my Son, when he received the laſt inſtructions, " there will, in caſe you ſucceed, be a new Act at your return, " in order to lay you under new reſtrictions, which were not " thought of in the Act of the 12th of Queen Anne ; I ſay, " had this been the caſe, I might have expected ſome ſuch " treatment as I now meet with.

" It

" It muſt be owned that my caſe is very hard, but I hope I
" am the firſt, and, for my country's ſake, ſhall be the laſt that
" ſuffers by pinning my faith on an Engliſh Act of Parliament.
" Had I received my juſt reward, for certainly it may be ſo
" called after 40 years cloſe application in the improvement of
" of that talent which it had pleaſed God to give me, then my
" invention would have taken the courſe which all improve-
" ments in this world do, that is, I muſt have inſtructed work-
" men in its principles and execution, which I ſhould have been
" glad to have had an opportunity of doing: but how widely this
" is different to what is now propoſed, viz. for me to inſtruct
" people that I know nothing of, and ſuch as may know no-
" thing of mechanicks; and if I do not make them under-
" ſtand to their ſatisfaction, I may then have nothing! hard
" fate indeed to me, but ſtill harder to the world, which may
" be deprived of this my invention, which muſt be the caſe,
" except by my open and free manner of deſcribing all the prin-
" ciples of it to gentlemen and workmen, who almoſt, at all
" times, have had free recourſe to ſee my inſtruments; and if
" any of theſe workmen ſhall have been ſo ingenious as to have
" got my invention, how far you will pleaſe to reward them
" for their piracy, muſt be left for you to determine; and I
" muſt ſit myſelf down in old age, and thank God I can be
" more eaſy in that I have made the conqueſt, and though I
" have no reward, than if I had come ſhort of the matter, and
" by ſome deluſion had the reward.

" I am,

" Lords and Gentlemen,

" May 30, 1765. " Your humble Servant,

" *John Harriſon.*"

Mr. Harriſon was then told, by a majority of the Commiſſioners preſent, that with regard to experimental exhibitions, to which he ſeemed to make ſo much objection, all that the Board meant thereby, was, that in caſe there ſhould be any particular operations relating to the conſtruction of his Timekeeper, which could not be ſufficiently explained by words, ſo as to convey a full and clear idea of the method of executing the ſame, in ſuch caſe the Board would expect to ſee the operation performed, or the experiment made. The method of tempering his ſprings was inſtanced as one of thoſe operations or experiments; and it was ſuppoſed there might be others of the like nature. Upon which he left the Board abruptly, declaring, "*That he "never would conſent to it, ſo long as he had a drop of Engliſh "blood in his body.*"

His ſon alſo withdrew.

The following form of an oath (grounded upon the abovementioned Reſolutions of the 28th and 30th of laſt month) was then drawn up, viz.

Weſtminſter to wit,

Mr. John Michell,
Mr. William Ludlam,
John Bird,
Thomas Mudge,
William Mathews,
Larcum Kendal.

"I John Harriſon do ſwear, that the annexed drawings "and written paper contain a full explanation of the principles "upon which my Watch or Timekeeper for diſcovering the "Longitude is conſtructed: and I further do ſwear, that I "will give to the Commiſſioners appointed by Act of Parliament "for the diſcovery of the Longitude at ſea, and to the ſix per-"ſons named in the margin, who have been choſen by them "to be preſent at the diſcovery, ſuch further explanation by "word of mouth, and by experimental exhibitions where "judged

" judged neceſſary, as ſhall be required of me relative to the " conſtruction of the ſaid Watch or Timekeeper; and that I " will produce the ſame, take it to pieces, and anſwer truly to " every queſtion propoſed by the ſaid Commiſſioners, and the " other perſons above-mentioned, or any of them, relative " thereto."

And Mr. Harriſon's Son (his Father being gone) was called in; and the ſaid form having been ſhewn to him, he was aſked, if he thought his Father would take it previous to the diſcovery; he anſwered in the negative, and told the Board, that his Father had declared, before he went, "*that he would have nothing further to do with it.*"—He was then deſired to withdraw.

Reſolved, nem. con.

That it is the opinion of this Board, that the terms which have been propoſed to Mr. Harriſon, for a diſcovery of the principles and conſtruction of his Watch, or Timekeeper, are reaſonable and proper; and that, as he has ſo peremptorily refuſed to comply therewith, they do not think themſelves authorized to give him any certificate, or that it is to any purpoſe to treat with him any further upon the matter, till he alters his preſent ſentiments.

Reſolved,

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the Commiſſioners, with reſpect to Mr. Harriſon, ſince the late Act was paſſed relating to his Timekeeper, be printed and made public.

John Ibbetſon, Secretary to the Commiſſioners.

F I N I S.

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